
TITLE 312 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Notice of Public Hearing
LSA Document #11-358**Notice of Public Hearing**

Under [IC 4-22-2-24](#), notice is hereby given that on October 11, 2011, at 6:00 p.m., at the McCormick's Creek State Park, Canyon Inn, 451 McCormicks Creek Park Road, Oak Room, Spencer, Indiana; **AND** on October 17, 2011, at 6:00 p.m., at the Miami County Fairgrounds, 1029 West 200 North, Community Building, Peru, Indiana, the Natural Resources Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to [312 IAC 9-7-6](#) to replace the minimum size limit of 12 inches for black bass taken from rivers or streams with a statewide requirement that black bass taken from rivers and streams must be less than 12 inches long or greater than 15 inches long, with not more than two black bass being greater than 15 inches long and removes this requirement for the Blue River in Crawford, Harrison, and Washington counties.

[IC 4-22-2-24\(d\)\(3\)](#) Justification Statement: The DNR proposed amendments to [312 IAC 9-7-6](#) governing the size of black bass (smallmouth, largemouth, and spotted bass) that can be taken from rivers and streams in Indiana. The changes would allow the harvest of black bass that are less than 12 inches long or more than 15 inches long with not more than two per day to be taken that are 15 inches in length or more. An individual would still be able to take or possess not more than five black bass (largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass) in aggregate (total number) per day, but an individual would not be able to take any fish that are 12 inches to 15 inches in length.

The purpose of the rule change is to provide increased protection for black bass populations and thereby potentially increase the quality of bass fishing opportunities in certain rivers and streams. The protection for black bass that are 12 to 15 inches long is intended to limit harvest of these bass that have the highest reproductive potential. There is currently a size limit of 12 inches for black bass taken from rivers or streams. Without these rule changes, anglers would continue to be able to take a daily bag limit of five black bass greater than 15 inches in length, reducing the number that could be caught by other anglers, as well as take black bass that are 12 to 15 inches in length.

The number of individuals who are directly affected by these changes is expected to be approximately 750,000 anglers who fish in Indiana. The DNR does not know exactly how many anglers fish for bass in Indiana, but a survey done in 2004 of Indiana-licensed anglers indicated that many of them fish for largemouth bass or smallmouth bass, or both. There are no fiscal impacts to businesses. There is no new permit or license requirement and no other changes affecting businesses such as commercial fishing license holders.

Although some anglers keep the black bass that they catch, many do not. A survey of fish harvested by sport anglers on the East Fork White River in 2003 indicated the majority of black bass captured were later released. Therefore, the DNR believes that this proposed rule change will be supported by many anglers since they could still release any black bass caught that are 12 to 15 inches or over the bag limit and not be in violation. Anglers could also keep black bass that are less than 12 inches in length and over 15 inches in length in accordance with the bag limit.

All requirements or costs by the rule amendments on regulated entities under [IC 4-22-2-24\(d\)\(3\)](#) are reasonably necessary to provide for the protection of black bass populations.

The number of anglers in Indiana was obtained from the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife's database of fishing license holders.

Sources: The number of anglers in Indiana was obtained from the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife's database of fishing license holders.

Broussard, S., Haley, A, Burlingame, M., Shipman, S. Fishing in Indiana: Information Use, Preferences, and Specialization of Indiana Anglers. 2005. Purdue University Department of Forestry and Natural Resources and Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Hoffman, Kevin. Recreational Use Survey of the East Fork White River and White River. 2004.

Copies of these rules are now on file at the Indiana Government Center North, 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N501 and Legislative Services Agency, Indiana Government Center North, 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N201, Indianapolis, Indiana and are open for public inspection.

Bryan W. Poynter
Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

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